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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains a summary of the preparation efforts of the United States for participation in the U.N. Conference on the Human Environment. This conference, the first world-wide effort of governments to consider and act upon the environmental problems of the entire human community, was held in Stockholm in June, 1972. Description is given of the planning phase of the conference, the agenda, the varied interests and issues to be considered, and of expected accomplishments of the meeting. The major topics discussed include: 1) Planning and Management of Human Settlements for Environmental Quality; 2) Environmental Aspects of Natural Resource Management; 3) Identification and Control of Pollutants of Broad Educational Significance; 4) Educational Social, Cultural, and Informational Implications of Action Proposals; 5) Development and Environment; and 6) International Organization and the Environment. In summary, the priority objectives of the United States government in the Stockholm conference are listed. (SHM)

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Safeguarding Our World Environment

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The U.N. Conference on the Human Environment

Stockholm, June 1972

Department of State

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The Conference at a Glance

Official Name

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

Time and Place

June 5 to 16, 1972, in Stockholm, Sweden.

Participants

Delegations representing more than 130 nations belonging to the U.N. and related agencies. Each nation may have six delegates with additional advisers and alternates. A total of 15 seats is available in the plenary and three conference committees for each national delegation. Also present will be observers for U.N. agencies, regional organizations, and more than 100 international nongovernmental organizations, as well as news correspondents.

Convened by

U.N. General Assembly, by resolution 2398, adopted December 3, 1968.

Main Purpose

"To serve as a practical means to encourage, and to provide guidelines for, action by Governments and international organizations designed to protect and improve the human environment and to remedy and prevent its impairment, by means of international cooperation, bearing in mind the particular importance of enabling developing countries to forestall the occurrence of such problems." (General Assembly Resolution 2581, December 15, 1969.)

Agenda Topics

1. Planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality.
2. Environmental aspects of natural resource management.
3. Identification and control of pollutants of broad international significance.
4. Educational, social, cultural, and informational implications of action proposals.
5. Development and environment.
6. International organization and the environment.

Anticipated Action

The conference will have before it for approval:

–an "*Action Plan for the Human Environment*" containing proposals on the six agenda topics. These will take the form of action recommendations addressed to governments, international agencies, etc. The "Action Plan for the Human Environment" has been drafted under the direction of an international secretariat, drawing on views and knowledge of governments and expert sources in U.N. agencies and elsewhere.

–drafts of several international *conventions* now in preparation by negotiating groups of governments. One of these is a draft convention, first proposed by the United States, to control the dumping of wastes into the oceans. Others concern conservation of natural areas and cultural and historical sites under a World Heritage Trust.

–a *Declaration on the Human Environment*, proclaiming the need for worldwide cooperation in this area and setting forth certain guiding principles for world action.

U.S. Participation

The U.S. Government has been active in the conference preparations from the outset. Chief U.S. delegate in the Preparatory Committee is Christian A. Herter, Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Environmental Affairs. Citizen advice to the policymakers is provided through an Advisory Committee (see inside back cover) headed by Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., of Tennessee. The U.S. delegation to the conference will be accredited by the Department of State in consultation with the White House.

Expanding International Cooperation on the Environment

We are now growing accustomed to the view of our planet as seen from space—a blue and brown disk shrouded in white patches of clouds. But we do not ponder often enough the striking lesson it teaches about the global reach of environmental imperatives. No matter what else divides men and nations, this perspective should unite them. We must work harder to foster such world environmental consciousness and shared purpose.

To cope with environmental questions that are truly international, we and other nations look to the first world conference of governments ever convened on this subject: the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June of this year. This should be a seminal event of the international community's attempt to cope with these serious, shared problems of global concern that transcend political differences.

But efforts to improve the global environment cannot go forward without the means to act.

—To help provide such means, I propose that a voluntary United Nations Fund for the Environment be established, with an initial funding goal of $100 million for the first 5 years.

This Fund would help to stimulate international cooperation on environmental problems by supporting a centralized coordination point for United Nations activities in this field. It would also help to bring new resources to bear on the increasing number of worldwide problems through activities such as monitoring and cleanup of the oceans and atmosphere.

—If such a Fund is established, I will recommend to the Congress that the United States commit itself to provide its fair share of the Fund on a matching basis over the first 5 years.

This level of support would provide startup assistance under mutually agreed-upon terms. As these programs get underway, it may well be that the member nations will decide that additional resources are required. I invite other nations to join with us in this commitment to meaningful action.

President Richard Nixon
Message on the Environment, February 8, 1972

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Foreword

Pollution, ecology, recycling, environmental action—in a very few years these words have entered the vocabulary of Americans in every part of the nation. No wonder! Our country is the greatest producer and the greatest consumer of goods in all history. Only recently we began to wake up to the fact that we are also the greatest consumer of natural resources and the greatest polluter.

What many don't yet realize is that the American people are not alone in confronting environmental problems. In many respects it is rapidly becoming a global problem. National action will not suffice; global steps must be taken promptly to deal with it. If not, the fish kills in the Baltic Sea and the Volga, the dead trees on the Italian coast, the algae bloom in Lake Erie and Lake Nakuru, the smog in Seoul and Ankara, the oil spills from tankers and drilling accidents in many parts of the world, and other such seemingly "local" environmental disasters, may soon merge into irreversible global damage—to the atmosphere, the oceans, the population centers, and the basic resources on which man depends for his well-being, and indeed his life.

The Stockholm conference on the human environment in June will address this tremendous new human problem area. Its participants will be representatives of governments—decisionmakers with the power to initiate action. No such conference has ever been held before. It will signal the initiation by the family of nations of an attack on problems that sooner or later will affect them all.

The American people have an important stake in the work to be achieved at Stockholm. Our Government is playing a major role in the preparations along with other interested nations. In so doing we are acting in the spirit that Congress had in mind when, in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, it directed the Federal Government to "recognize the worldwide and long-range character of environmental problems" and join in appropriate steps "to maximize international cooperation in anticipating and preventing a decline in the quality of mankind's world environment."

This booklet tells about our efforts, through the coming Stockholm conference, to carry out that new American policy. It describes the problems and proposals the conference will consider, and why its work can be significant for the well-being of all Americans—those of our own and future generations.

Howard H. Baker, Jr., U.S. Senator
Chairman, Secretary's Advisory Committee,
1972 U.N. Conference
on the Human Environment

CHAPTER 1

Environmental Quality: A World Problem

One spring day in the late 1950's scientists in Michigan, seeking to account for a catastrophic decline in the local population of certain bird species, found something new to their experience. It was a sky-blue robin's egg lying in a nest, outwardly quite normal—yet unhatched after three weeks of incubation (half again the normal period), and never to be hatched. Residues of DDT sprayed on the trees, concentrated in the bodies of earthworms eaten by the parent robins, had doomed this egg to death.

From such bits of evidence came the disturbing discovery that modern wonder chemicals such as the chlorinated hydrocarbons—defender of crops, scourge of the typhus louse and the malarial mosquito—were not an unmixed blessing, and that their incautious use could wreak major destruction on valuable living species and on the balance of nature.

In December 1968, cruising toward the Moon in their lunar capsule, the Apollo 8 Astronauts viewed what no man had ever seen before: the Earth, sailing through the black void with its brownish continents and glittering oceans, its swirls of cloud and blue envelope of air. There it hung—that most astonishing of sights, man's own home—as the poet Archibald Macleish was to describe it: ". . . the Earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats."

These two round patches of blue—the robin's egg and the Earth—could stand as symbols for our new awareness of two truths. First, that man's technological genius can produce not only great and intended benefits but also great and unintended harm. Second, that the Earth itself, with its thin life-supporting surface, is single, finite, and more fragile than we had supposed—so much so that modern man, with his immense power to manipulate nature and his immense

growth in sheer numbers, could one day, if he is not more careful, put his planetary home in mortal danger.

Inevitably, it was in the industrial countries, the world's leaders in technological innovation and in consumption of raw materials, that the environmental alarm was first sounded. Pollution of air and water—of rivers, lakes, and seashores—destruction of forests and wildlife, depletion of key mineral resources, mountains of solid waste, the depressing blight of sprawling urban-industrial areas—these phenomena together were a warning that could no longer be ignored. None experienced this awakening more sharply than Americans. We became aware that our fabled standard of living had its other and ominous side, one which was increasingly threatening the quality of American life.

Awareness was followed by action. In the United States the response was enormous. Citizen groups to save the environment sprang up everywhere. New laws and regulations—local, state, and Federal—began tightening up on pollution from motor vehicles, factories, mines, power plants, farms, and cities. Recycling of wastes, city planning, mass transport, land-use planning, resource management, family planning—all these received new impetus. Great efforts and costs lie ahead; but, nationally, the United States has made a strong beginning in the struggle against the huge neglected backlog of environmental decay.

The story is similar in other industrial countries where growth has been rapid: in Europe, in Japan, in the Soviet Union, and parts of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In every case rising prosperity has brought rising pollution and environmental degradation—and a beginning of remedial action. New antipollution laws have been enacted in Japan since Tokyo and Osaka experienced their first acute air pollution crisis in 1970. England and Wales have begun a five-year, $3.8 billion program to clean up 2,000 miles of polluted rivers. Environmental blight has become a national issue in the Soviet Union, where such ecological treasures as Eastern Siberia's fabulous Lake Baikal, the deepest and once the purest great body of fresh water on earth, are being polluted by industrial wastes. Thus Baikal joins a casualty list of polluted lakes ranging from America's Erie and Tahoe to Kenya's Nakuru, one of the beauty spots of East Africa. The narrow or partly enclosed seas of the world—the Baltic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean, the Sea of Japan, the Gulf of Mexico—all have suffered major damage to fisheries and marine life.

In the less developed areas, it has been eloquently said that the worst pollution is the pollution of poverty—but the modern kind too is more and more apparent. From Bombay to Buenos Aires, from Abadan to Abidjan, problems of polluted waters, urban shantytowns, soil degradation, and depleted resources have appeared on the heels of development projects and accelerating growth in population.

All environmental problems are local at the outset, but they can quickly become international. Pollution or ecological damage can move across national borders, blown by prevailing winds or flowing into—and across—international rivers, lakes, and seas. Moreover, the global accumulation of local environmental problems brings the world's total of polluted air and water, climatic changes, resource depletion, and urban degradation to a point that demands new knowledge and new action at regional and even world levels to protect the world's total store of resources and the total quality of the earthly environment.

Regional action, though far from adequate, is already a fact. The United States itself is a party to growing environmental efforts in NATO's Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society; in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Western Europe, North America, and Japan); in the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe (which includes Eastern Europe); and in the U.S.-Canadian Joint Commission, which is seeking to reduce pollution in the Great Lakes. International river commissions deal with the water quality in such rivers as the Rhine and the Rio de la Plata. In Southeast Asia, Singapore has taken the lead in promoting cooperation on environmental problems among the nations of the region. And recently, the U.N.'s Economic Commissions for Asia, Africa, and Latin America have all begun to take an interest in this field.

But never yet have governments met on a worldwide scale to consider, and act upon, the environmental problems of the entire human community. The first such meeting in history, already more than three years in preparation, will take place when delegates of some 130 nations meet at Stockholm, Sweden, for two weeks, June 5 to 16, 1972, in the U.N. Conference on the Human Environment. The scope of their concern is expressed in the official conference motto: "Only One Earth."

The chapters that follow are about the Stockholm conference—how the plans got started, the agenda, the varied interests and issues that will be in evidence there, and what

the conference may accomplish. Also, and not least important: the stake of American citizens in this first world environmental conference and in its continuing objectives.

CHAPTER II

The Stockholm Conference: A New Step

The idea of a world conference of governments, under the auspices of the United Nations, on the problems of the human environment was first officially proposed in 1968. Sweden, a neutral country with advanced industry and a long coastline on the Baltic Sea—one of the most dangerously polluted marine areas in the world—proposed that such a conference be held in order to impart "a common outlook and direction" to the various environmental projects that had begun to appear on the international scene, and "to focus the attention of Governments and public opinion on the importance and urgency of this question."

The United States was among the enthusiastic supporters of this proposal, which was approved without a dissenting vote by the U.N. General Assembly.

The following year, 1969, the Assembly made further decisions: that the conference would be held in Stockholm, in response to Sweden's invitation, from June 5 to 16, 1972; and that a 27-nation Preparatory Committee should be formed to advise and assist the Secretary General in preparing studies and proposals for consideration and approval by the world conference.

All through 1970 and 1971 the preparations gathered speed. The Preparatory Committee* has spread its work over four sessions, the last of which is scheduled for March 6-17, 1972, in New York. To direct the preparations the conference acquired its own Secretary General, Maurice F. Strong, a young Canadian industrialist, until then head of Canada's

*Members of the Preparatory Committee are: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore, Sweden, Togo, the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, the United States, Yugoslavia, and Zambia. The Chairman is Ambassador Keith Johnson of Jamaica.

International Development Agency. Under his coordination an "Action Plan for the Human Environment" has been drafted for submission to the conference. The materials for it have flowed in from many sources:

–Some 70 nations have submitted "national reports" on their own environmental problems and policies. For many countries this report is the first national environmental survey ever attempted.

–Technical papers and case studies have come in from governments, expert consultants, and agencies of the U.N. system, on topics ranging from marine ecology to atmospheric monitoring and plant genetics.

–Expert groups have been convened to write special reports on environmental aspects of economic development and on the future organization of the international environmental effort.

–Intergovernmental working groups have been formed to develop top priority action proposals on such subjects as global monitoring, marine pollution, conservation of soils and other resources, and a broad Declaration on the Human Environment.

–To furnish a basic conceptual background, a "Report on the State of the Environment" has been drafted by British economist Barbara Ward Jackson under the guidance of an international panel of 100 scientists headed by the microbiologist René Dubos.

Guiding this ferment of preparation are certain ruling concepts:

–First: The Stockholm conference has been purposely conceived and planned not as a meeting of experts or scientists–though a vast amount of expert and scientific advice has gone into the preparations–but as a conference of instructed governmental delegations, authorized to speak for the nations of the world on specific action proposals which the conference will address to governments and to intergovernmental organizations for implementation. In short, the government decisionmakers will occupy center stage.

–Second: The preparations are at least as important as the conference itself. With but two weeks to consider and act on such a broad and novel agenda, as a practical matter most of the action proposals must be written, and most of the difficult issues ironed out, during the preparatory phase.

–Third: The time frame for environmental action ranges

from "right now" to "far in the future." Actions widely recognized as urgent, and for which sufficient knowledge exists, can be decided on with some degree of finality at Stockholm. Other important actions, but less urgent or more involved in unknowns, can be advanced to the planning or early implementation stage. The truly long-range questions, demanding extensive research, can at least be raised at Stockholm and steps taken to search for the answers.

–Finally: The enormous range of environmental problems is viewed in varying perspectives by different countries at different stages of development. Highly industrialized countries center their concerns on air and water pollution, disposal of wastes, and resource depletion. Low income countries, striving for industrial development, worry more about endemic disease, impure drinking water, soil erosion, and the poverty of their urban and rural life. However, all countries suffer each of these problems–different in intensity and impact on the lives of their people. The Stockholm conference must address itself to the whole range of these problems–and their solutions–as they exist today and as they may exist for generations to come.

CHAPTER III

The Stockholm Agenda: A Widening Perspective

Awareness of the vulnerability of our environment has not come to modern man all at once, but in stages. In America such awareness was first reflected in the "conservation" movement of the early 20th century when the Nation, responding to such leaders as Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt, at length awoke to the dangers threatening our forests and wildlife. Much later, the technological boom which followed World War II, gave rise to a growing range of problems reflected in our national vocabulary by such terms as "antipollution," "ecology," and "urban planning." Today, at last, we perceive the totality of the problem as a concern for "the quality of life."

The same widening perspective has been evident on the global level, in the preparations for the Stockholm conference. As governments and scientists considered what should be the scope of this unprecedented gathering, they agreed that it would have to take account of such ramified and interrelated facts as these:

—Waste products in the air we breathe, in our food and drink, excessive noise—all these can inflict direct and large-scale damage on human health.

—Ever-growing quantities of noxious wastes (heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium, and lead, certain chemical compounds now widely used in agriculture and industry, notably the chlorinated hydrocarbons and polychlorinated biphenyls), aside from what they may do to the human body, also may combine to inflict irreversible damage on the vital web of life in large areas of land and sea.

—Large-scale destruction of forest or grass cover leads to erosion of irreplaceable topsoil, turns thriving areas into deserts, reduces the world's vital food supplies and habitable areas.

–As standards of consumption rise and population growth rates in many areas accelerate, demand intensifies relentlessly on the earth's finite store of natural resources–minerals, fossil fuels, and living species. Disquieting questions arise as to what resources will remain for our descendants.

–The worldwide, long-term drift of people from the land to the cities–places never planned to cope with this unceasing human tide–is involving more and more of humanity in the physical and social frustrations that come from unplanned urban development.

–Finally: For the vast majority in today's world, the most massive obstacles to a better life are not the environmental pollution of industrialism but the insults of poverty: too little to eat, poor sanitation, endemic disease, urban shanty-towns and rural slums, ignorance, unemployment, uprooted-ness, and loss of hope. These problems, though not all ecological, cannot be ignored in a truly global search for a better human environment.

How this whole amalgam of problems is to be dealt with is, in essence, the question facing the Stockholm conference. It is far too big a question to be solved in one conference, no matter how well prepared; but a beginning must be made.

The nature of that beginning is reflected in the items on the conference agenda. The major topics to be discussed are described in this and the following chapter.

Topic 1: Planning and Management of Human Settlements for Environmental Quality

Pollutants may circle the globe, veins of ore in remote mountains may approach exhaustion–but the environmental troubles that people know most directly are the ones they encounter every day where they live and work. The quality of life in the villages and cities of the world will be, appropriately, the first major subject for the world's first conference on the human environment.

For the majority of mankind, the environmental problems of human settlements merge indistinguishably into the problems of poverty. These problems cannot be fully solved without major economic and social development, a field of action to which the international community has long since accorded high priority and whose implementation goes far beyond the scope of the Stockholm conference.

But the converse is equally true, and highly pertinent to Stockholm: namely, that true economic and social

development, development that not only increases the production and consumption of goods but also really improves the quality of daily life, must have a care for environmental values. (See discussion under Topic 5.) Nowhere is this more true than in the planning and management of rural and urban settlements.

This subject is shaped by one of the great human phenomena of modern times: the worldwide migration to the often ephemeral attractions of the city. In the United States, once a primarily rural nation, nearly three-quarters of the people now live in urban areas. In the low-income countries the proportion of urban dwellers in 1960 was one-third, but the migration is taking place at such speed that demographers expect half the world's people to live in cities by the year 2000. If today's trends are any indication, more and more of these migrants will live in decaying slums or in jerry-built shantytowns where shelter and sanitation are sadly deficient.

With these facts in mind, the conference is expected to take up such critical questions as these:

–Can the ceaseless migration to the metropolis be halted, or at least slowed, by developing smaller regional cities as "growth poles" with jobs, mass communications, schools, services, and amenities attractive to people in the surrounding countryside?

–Can the immense world shortage of decent housing be effectively reduced in low-income countries by emphasizing local building materials and labor-intensive methods, with government providing basic community services and inexpensive mortgages?

–How can transportation be provided for in ways compatible with sound city and land-use planning?

–What can be done about grossly polluted water supply and inadequate waste disposal facilities–chief sources of disease in most of the world's settlements, both urban and rural?

–How can new migrants to cities, uprooted from their past traditions, be integrated into viable communities with a stable family and social life in which children can grow up as responsible citizens?

–Can we reduce the impact of natural disasters–earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, and floods–through wiser building and siting of settlements, and through more efficient early warning systems?

Since improvement of human settlements is essentially a

matter for national or even local governments, they must find their own answers to most of these questions. But the international community has an important supporting role to play. It is deeply involved in development assistance throughout the developing world. It can provide experts and exchanges of information to help nations work out environmentally sound rural and urban settlement plans, and to integrate these into overall national development planning. It can perform supporting research. It can maintain efficient referral systems so that each country knows where to learn what other countries are doing about specific problems such as purifying the water or upgrading squatter settlements. It can improve disaster warning networks. It can provide the essential interdisciplinary training for national planning officials in this complex field. By stimulating such international work—as well as by direct recommendations to governments—the Stockholm conference has a chance to do something about the environmental quality of the places where people live.

Topic 2: Environmental Aspects of Natural Resource Management

If urban pollution and degradation are the most obvious signs of environmental crisis, the most ominous long-term aspect could well be man's increasing pressure on a finite base of natural resources. This will be a second major focus of concern at Stockholm.

What is a natural resource? In its broadest sense it is anything in nature for which man feels a need, whether for himself or for his posterity. He may want to process and consume it to fill his stomach, clothe and house his family, or gratify his whim. Or he may want to preserve it in its natural state as a storehouse for posterity or a source of refreshment to his spirit.

Man's wants did not begin to ramify just yesterday, nor did his destructive impact on nature. In ancient times large areas of irrigated farmland in the Fertile Crescent were ruined by salination and had to be abandoned. Careless farming and overgrazing made deserts out of much of Palestine, the Biblical "land flowing with milk and honey," and coastal Libya, granary of the Roman Empire. But these ancient ecological disasters were small compared to what modern man can do if, with his vast numbers and technological power, he is equally improvident.

Our impact on natural resources is more complex than might first appear.

–We are depleting at an accelerating rate the earth's limited, nonrenewable resources of minerals.

–We are beginning in some areas to use and pollute fresh water faster than nature can purify and recycle it.

–In many areas of the world irreplaceable soils are being eroded or ruined through overcutting of forests, overgrazing, and overcultivation.

–Skyrocketing demands for energy threaten fuel resources and raise new headaches of chemical and thermal pollution.

–These same practices, combined with surface mining and pollution of coastlands, are upsetting natural ecosystems and threatening the survival of many plant and animal species, from microscopic plankton up to giant redwoods.

–Scenic parklands are threatened by over-use or, in many cases, by competing economic uses.

And meanwhile raw materials of all kinds, once processed and consumed, enter the ever-growing rivers of pollution and mountains of junk at the back door of modern civilization. Wild nature, once a seemingly bottomless sink and automatic recycling plant for the effluents of mankind, is already approaching, in more and more areas, the limits of its recuperative power.

The Stockholm conference, under the heading of natural resources management, will consider all these facts and what to do about them. Farms, forests and fisheries, wildlife and parks, water supply, minerals, and energy all find a place on its agenda. It will consider what needs to be done about questions like these:

–To what extent can recycling of used products not only reduce pollution but also relieve the pressure on limited mineral resources? For example, can we conserve and recycle the phosphates which are essential for industry and agriculture but which, as waste runoff, ruin many of our lakes and rivers?

–With civilization rapidly pushing back the world's wild areas, should we begin to assemble global "genetic pools" to preserve the immense variety of wild plants, animals, and micro-organisms needed for future scientific breeding in order to outwit pests and produce abundant food and fiber?

–How can nations manage their agricultural and forest programs not only to produce abundant cash crops but also to preserve the environment from pollution and erosion?

–To what extent can municipal wastes be recycled instead of being left to pollute surrounding waters?

–To what extent can less damaging pest control methods be substituted for the heavy use of persistent chemical pesticides?

–How can remote sensing by high-flying aircraft (and by earth satellite–a technology now in advanced development) be fully exploited to detect marine pollution, erosion, spreading agricultural or forest blights, and similar ecological degradation?

–How can economic development be managed so as to assure the preservation of wildlife and their associated ecosystems?

–In the light of growing population and tourism, what protected [illegible]ral areas will future generations need for recreation a[illegible]ntific research?

–Can aquaculture or "fish farming" be developed on a world scale to increase fish supplies without upsetting marine ecology?

–Since man's use of fresh water will more than double by the year 2000, what measures will have to be taken to assure the right amounts and purities of water when and where they are needed?

–Can the world's fast-rising demand for energy be met without unacceptable damage to the environment? Or will the use of energy for some low priority purposes have to be increasingly discouraged or even prohibited?

The recommendations at Stockholm on such resource management problems as these will help to determine what gifts of nature–both living and inert–will remain for use in future generations.

Topic 3: Identification and Control of Pollutants of Broad International Significance

Whether pollution is of local or world significance is a matter of scale. An oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel in California or Long Island Sound in New York exerts no measurable effect in the Mediterranean or the Sea of Japan, which have massive pollution problems of their own. But if we add all these together, along with similar conditions in such water bodies as the Gulf of Mexico, the Baltic, the North Sea, and the Persian Gulf–inland seas and coastal waters receiving day after day the steadily rising flow of pollutants that wash down from all the rivers of the industrial

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world—we discover that the increased burden of pollution in the waters of the Earth has become, for the first time in history, a significant and worrisome problem. And so it is too with the hundreds of millions of tons of chemical and particulate matter spewed yearly into the atmosphere from the smokestacks and exhaust pipes of five continents, working their way into the air, land, and sea of the whole planet.

As these problems are global, so also must the attack on them be, in great measure, global. This is true of both the major types of action against pollution with which the conference will concern itself: control and monitoring.

Control of certain kinds of environmental pollution requires international cooperation for several practical reasons:

—Pollutants from one nation can, and do, enter the territory of another and damage its interests.

—Pollutants from all nations enter the common realm—the atmosphere and the oceans.

—If an industrial polluter mends his ways and pays the extra cost of pollution control, a competitor who continues to pollute in some other country may gain an unfair price advantage.

The need for cooperation in these areas is easy to state but hard to apply. Considering the complexities involved, we are probably a long way from the time when international control is likely to extend to regulating what any country's factories or cities may lawfully dump into its own rivers or into the ambient air. But some progress can be made now. International agreements have been on the books for years restricting, for example, the dumping of petroleum by tankers at sea.

In preparation for the Stockholm conference, an Intergovernmental Working Group on Marine Pollution has launched two further efforts along the same line. One is a draft convention by which national governments would agree to impose a measure of control over dumping noxious wastes in international waters from their territory (typically by barge trains towed out from the land). This agreement was first proposed by the United States and is being revised to reflect the ideas of a wide range of nations, with a view to possible signature at Stockholm in June. The second effort, proposed by Canada, is to draw up a set of general principles for approval by the conference, relating to the entire problem

of marine pollution and international cooperation to combat it.

Monitoring for environmental pollution—backed up by scientific research—is essential in order to improve on our present fragmentary knowledge of what kinds and sources of pollution will have to be controlled. One reason many governments hesitate now to go beyond the modest ocean dumping convention described above is that so much remains to be discovered about which pollutants are entering the seas of the world, where they come from, where they go, what damage they do, and what the trends are.

Environmental monitoring is an old story—at the local level. Generations ago the caged canary in the mine shaft was a crude but effective monitor of deadly coal gas. Municipalities routinely monitor the purity of water supply and, increasingly, of air quality as well. But monitoring at the world level of the various elements of our environment is either nonexistent or fragmentary at best. A major aim of the Stockholm conference will be to recommend a long-term global program for monitoring of pollutants and their effects in four environments: (1) the human body; (2) the atmosphere; (3) the oceans; (4) the land.

In addition, proposals are being prepared on how to establish internationally accepted criteria identifying the effects of dangerous pollutants in different environments such as air and water. If nations can agree on such criteria, based on scientific evidence of what is tolerable for human health and well-being, then governments can proceed to set local emission standards to assure that these pollutants are held within safe limits.

This program would be backed by basic scientific research into the behavior of our natural environment and the impact on it of technology. Rather than create a new international bureaucracy, the program would be built as much as possible on the ongoing work of existing international agencies and the world scientific community.

Questions to which such a world monitoring and research program would seek continuous, comparable, year-to-year answers would include:

—Are there changes in the proportion of people with diseases or defects of genetic origin, and can such changes be traced to contaminants in the environment?

—What pollutants, such as traces of heavy metals, are found in human tissue, and what toxic substances are found in food?

–What changes are taking place in the world's atmosphere and climate, and to what extent is man causing them?

–What noxious waste products flow from the world's land masses, and what is their impact on marine life, both near the shore and in the deep oceans?

–What changes are taking place in the world's varied ecosystems–pine forest, tundra, savanna, tropical rain forest, etc.–and how are manmade pollutants and disturbances contributing to these changes?

Such a wide-ranging, long-term monitoring program, backed by technical training and research, will require cooperation from nations all over the world. Air and water sampling stations, vital statistics, studies of animal population and movement–all this will call for international networks, carefully coordinated to standardize data and to concentrate the search on information that is really needed. The most advanced monitoring technology will be required, including the use of earth satellites.

The result, over a period of years, will be a steadily unfolding picture of our earthly environment and man's effect on it–a picture that governments can rely on as a guide to cooperative action against the ecological dangers which threaten them all.

CHAPTER IV

The Stockholm Agenda: Further Implications

What the Stockholm conference does about global pollution, natural resources, and human settlements, the three main sectors of the world environmental problem—discussed in the preceding chapter—will have major implications in other spheres. These provide the focus for three additional subject areas on the agenda:

—The implications for educational, social, cultural, and informational action;
—The implications for international development;
—The implications for future international organization.

Topic 4: Educational, Social, Cultural, and Informational Implications of Action Proposals

Environmental education—in its broad rather than technical sense—will be as essential equipment as history or economics for the educated citizen of the future. In this respect every country has a long way to go. Environmental studies have become an overnight favorite in many American colleges and schools—but too often these studies are merely added mechanically onto existing courses instead of being presented as an integrated discipline to which the traditional disciplines of natural and social sciences and humanities all contribute. In most developing countries, where educational systems operate under many difficulties, environmental education is, at best, in its infancy. The Stockholm conference can provide encouragement and ideas for some useful beginnings in this newly recognized field.

A quite different educational need, which the conference will also consider, is specialized training of experts, especially in developing countries, in various ecological and environmental disciplines and, equally important, the multidisciplinary training of key administrators and development planners in the environmental implications of their work.

The social and cultural implications of environmental action are complex and profound. Will the culture of the future place sufficient value on an "environmental ethic" in which the individual and the group share responsibility for the present and future environmental quality of the larger community? Should sound environmental planning of human settlements consider not only physical but also social factors, e.g., the organization of space between home, workplace, market, recreation, transport, etc., to make possible a coherent society and a bearable daily routine? Will such concepts as ecology, human environment, development, economic growth, and gross product be seen in relation to a still wider concept, the quality of life? The conference will give an opportunity to encourage consideration of such basic questions of policy—and of philosophy underlying policy—by scholars, government leaders, and development planners.

Organs of public information, in turn, will be looked to as key participants in all these educational and value-forming efforts. Editors, reporters, film-makers, science writers—all professionals who are expert at making technical things clear to the citizen and decisionmaker—need access to the facts and ideas that are evolving about our world's environmental predicament. The Stockholm conference, where hundreds of correspondents for the world media, as well as representatives of influential citizen organizations, are expected to be on hand, should stimulate a long-term flow of basic environmental information to the world public and to key decisionmakers. Two proposed documents of potential importance in this effort will be the Declaration on the Human Environment (see next chapter) and the "Report on the State of the Environment" mentioned in Chapter II.

But it is not only the world public that needs a better flow of environmental information. Under this same agenda topic a different kind of information flow will also be dealt with: the *exchange of technical environmental information* among governments. Has country A developed a regulatory system for purifying the water supply, or for reclaiming depleted soils, that might be adapted to the needs of country B? Has country X enacted barriers against the importation of certain products from foreign industries whose lower standards of pollution control give them a competitive advantage? Where can country Z find the most current technical information on biological controls for a certain agricultural pest? The means of acquiring such information today are many but haphazard. One practical step at Stockholm may well be the creation of

a new environmental information referral system to help provide environmental facts where and when they are needed.

Topic 5: Development and Environment

It is a coincidence of history that the ominous side-effects of industrial technology have taken on global proportions at a moment when the great majority of nations are still striving to share in the fruits of that technology, and have for some time been receiving international development assistance to help them do so.

Can we, in this situation, manage the problems created by the world's technology without putting off the day when the hungry majority can share in its benefits? Is there a basic conflict between the older imperatives of development and the new imperative of environmental protection—or is environmental protection a basic aspect of all sound development?

The United Nations declared itself on this question in October 1970 when the General Assembly adopted a comprehensive "bible" of development, the International Development Strategy. That document says that since "the ultimate purpose of development is to provide increasing opportunities to all people for a better life," it is essential to take various measures aimed at that purpose—one of these being "to safeguard the environment." Governments undertake specifically to "intensify national and international efforts to arrest the deterioration of the human environment and to take measures toward its improvement, and to promote activities that will help to maintain the ecological balance on which human survival depends."

But this broad strategy could not address all the detailed interactions between economic and environmental goals as they affect the developing countries. These interactions are the focus of a separate topic on the Stockholm agenda. To help prepare this topic, an international panel of experts met in June 1971 at Founex, Switzerland, and wrote a groundbreaking report identifying a number of development-environment issues and making tentative recommendations for national and international policy action. This "Founex Report" was subsequently discussed at a series of regional environmental seminars in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East held in the summer of 1971.

The issues arising from the relationships of environmental

protection to development, trade, and international aid will not be quickly solved, because they involve many complex calculations of comparative cost and comparative benefit on the part of both developed and developing nations. In some ways the perspectives of the industrial countries and the low-income countries on these issues will inevitably diverge. However, there is an overriding truth that tends to unite these perspectives.

This truth is simply that no country is all rich or all poor, all industrial or all bucolic. All human societies are, to one degree or another, in need of economic development—just as all are, obviously, in need of ecological and environmental protection. Man seeks to manipulate his natural environment to his own comfort and advantage. But his aim of a better life will not be realized either in total industrialization or in the opposite extreme of simply going "back to nature." He has no choice but to find his own balance of advantages, calculating his intrusions into nature's balance far more wisely than heretofore, so as to assure as well as he can a decent life for the enormous human population of today—without jeopardizing that same chance for the still more enormous populations of generations to come.

This means that the decisions which all nations face in the environment-development equation are not choices between absolute goods and absolute bads; they are rather trade-offs aimed at comparative advantage. They are questions for the strategic planner and the systems analyst. In a highly industrialized country typical questions might be:

—How much can the prices of our fuels and other key resources be allowed to rise—in the interest of conservation and environmental protection—without slowing down the economy?

—How can we move toward an economic and industrial structure with more recycling and lower resource consumption per unit of value?

—Can we work out international ground rules for such a shift, so that countries that husband their resources don't lose out in trading competition?

In a country at an early stage of development some typical questions might be:

—How fast can we push our agricultural expansion without courting such environmental troubles as soil erosion, eutrophication of waters from fertilizer runoff, and exhaustion of groundwater? Or:

–What antipollution standards should we, in our own interest, impose on an investor whose capital and skills we need, and whose products must sell abroad at competitive prices, but whose pollutants could damage our fisheries?

In sum, the environmental decisions of the future will exert a complex variety of impacts on the worldwide drive for economic growth. These impacts will be seen in different lights depending on the value which nations attach to quantitative growth per se as against the broader and less measurable aspects of the quality of life. But one thing is certain: the more today's low-income nations modernize their agriculture and industry, the more they will be exposed to environmental side-effects, which by provident study of the mistakes of others, they could to a large extent avoid. To this end, development planners, both in the governments of developing nations and in the agencies supplying outside aid, will increasingly seek to take environmental factors into account in their plans. They will consider not only the classic economic costs of producing a given product, but also the so-called "external" costs of environmental pollution and degradation. As a result, the quality of development–whether in Afghanistan or the United States–is likely to improve.

In all discussion of development and the human environment the population factor must be given major consideration. The burden man imposes on his planetary environment is the product of two factors, one technological–how much each of us consumes and pollutes; and the other demographic–how many of us there are. The weight of the technological factor is massive and immediate: for example, a baby born in the United States will impose during his lifetime at least 50 times as much environmental burden as a baby born in India. The weight of the demographic factor is also massive but it takes the form of a cruel dilemma. Either the already vast and still rapidly increasing populations of the world's poorest areas must continue in poverty or, in overcoming poverty they must–roughly in proportion to their numbers–enormously increase the degradation of the world environment. Escape from this dilemma will require not only environmental disciplines but also a slowing down–and ultimately a cessation–of population growth in all countries, poor and rich alike.

The three-year-old U.N. Fund for Population Activities helps nations, at their request, to slow down their population

growth rates—some of which mean doubling in 20 years or less. It is already a significant U.N. activity and is due to grow in importance; at India's suggestion, 1974 has been proclaimed by the United Nations as World Population Year. Although population control will not receive primary stress at the Stockholm conference, the environmental awareness which the conference is designed to foster is certain to encourage these efforts and, indeed, to strengthen the hand of all those working toward population goals in keeping with human aspirations and with the carrying capacity of the biosphere.

Topic 6: International Organization and the Environment

The conference next June in Stockholm will last two weeks—but the community of nations will be coping with problems of the environment for the foreseeable future. What continuing international arrangements should the world's governments make, through the United Nations or otherwise, to cooperate in dealing with these problems? This is the last—and some believe the most important—of the six major topics facing the 130 or so governments that will be represented at Stockholm.

In dealing with this organizational question we are not starting from scratch. More than a dozen agencies of the U.N. system, and several nongovernmental scientific bodies, already have undertaken significant responsibilities for environmental activity at the international level. Here are a few examples:

—An important head start toward environmental monitoring of the world atmosphere already exists in programs of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), especially its World Weather Watch and Global Atmospheric Research Program. In a global environmental monitoring effort WMO may seek the expert help of other specialized agencies, especially the World Health Organization (WHO), and of the global research capabilities of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), and its Scientific Committee on the Problems of the Environment.

—In marine pollution, a strong lead in research has been given by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (supported by UNESCO) with its Long-term and Expanded Program of Ocean Exploration and Research. Many U.N. specialized agencies are involved in various elements of the marine pollution problem. Both the Intergovernmental

Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), and a working group associated with the Stockholm Conference Preparatory Committee have been active in preparing international conventions to attack certain kinds of marine pollution on a global basis.

–Ecological science has for years been an important concern of UNESCO, which in 1968 held a world conference of experts on the biosphere and is now developing an ambitious "Man and Biosphere" research program.

–Problems of natural resource conservation–soil, water, minerals, and living species–already involve the World Bank, the U.N. Development Program, such specialized agencies as WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and nongovernmental bodies such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

–Problems of the urban environment are a concern of the U.N. Development Program, the World Bank, WHO, and the U.N. Committee for Housing, Building, and Planning, among others.

In addition to such activities of global organizations, all these subjects are a growing concern of U.N. and other regional bodies.

Impressive though it is, this showing of international environmental activity leaves much to be desired. Some key functions are inadequately dealt with and there is a lack of focus and coordination–as might be expected, since the international community has never yet addressed itself to the world's environmental problems as a whole. It remains for the Stockholm conference to do that, and to initiate whatever new steps the participating governments deem necessary.

It is too soon to predict what these steps will be, but some points of consensus seem to be emerging:

1. The functions to be performed–to be set forth in the Action Plan for the Human Environment being prepared for Stockholm–will determine what organization is needed to perform them.
2. As much as possible, the needed functions should be performed by existing international and regional bodies. No new super-agency should be created.
3. However, coordination is needed in a field already afflicted with dispersion of efforts among many autonomous bodies, with much duplication and a lack of clear priorities.
4. The logical location for an environmental coordinating

mechanism is the United Nations, with its global scope and the many existing environmental activities in the U.N. system. This mechanism might take the form of an intergovernmental committee backed by a small and highly professional secretariat.

5. To supplement existing work in a few key functions, such as monitoring, research, training, and information referral, the environmental secretariat should also administer an environmental fund contributed voluntarily by member states and private donors.

6. Finally, if the coordinating effort for this world environmental enterprise is to work, it will require a corresponding effort of coordination within the governments—the United States among them—that have power to act and are represented in the many international bodies involved.

These ideas about post-Stockholm organization are modest indeed compared to the suggestions of some observers who foresee, for example, a necessity before long for nations to submit to a high degree of compulsory international regulation over various activities hitherto regarded as purely domestic, that add to the sum of global environmental degradation. Whether or not such prophecies are borne out by events, it is a fact that, in this year of the Stockholm conference, the international community possesses neither the scientific knowledge to justify such drastic steps nor the political readiness to undertake them. Rather, the community, confronted as it is with this new challenge, finds itself in a posture that might be capsuled in three phrases: recognition of the problem as a whole, preliminary response to those parts of the problem that are known, and reconnaissance of those parts that are still unknown but suspected.

The form of organization appropriate to this phase will be simple and flexible, capable of change as the nature of the problem emerges more clearly. It will make the most of existing international capabilities in the environmental field. It may bring into existence an international nerve center whose duty will be to see to it that the fine words of resolutions adopted at Stockholm are carried into action. From such small but critical advances, given the adequate will of governments and of the peoples on whom governments depend, major achievements may emerge.

CHAPTER V

A New Declaration

Prominent among the documents which U.N. members decided should be prepared for adoption by the Stockholm conference is a draft Declaration on the Human Environment. The drafting of this document is in the hands of a 27-nation working group.

A precedent for this declaration can be found in the early history of the United Nations, when the General Assembly was wrestling with another potent idea, that of an international standard of human rights. Unable to agree at that stage on a treaty on this subject, where diverse value systems clash, the General Assembly adopted one of the most influential documents in U.N. history—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to this day a textbook for students, a source book for governments the world over, and the inspiration for a series of human rights conventions negotiated in the ensuing years.

The influence of the Human Rights Declaration derived not from any binding legal character—it has none—but from expert and judicious drafting, and from the fact that it dealt with a theme of transcendent importance to many peoples emerging from the bondage of wartime or of colonial rule. A similar story can be told of more recent U.N. declarations, such as the 1963 Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space—a forerunner of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.

Similarly, the drafters of the Declaration on the Human Environment hope that theirs too is an idea whose time has come. The declaration, according to the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, "should be a document of basic principles, calling mankind's urgent attention to the many varied and interrelated problems of the human environment, and to draw attention to the rights and obligations of man and State and the international community in regard thereto." Its function is to be twofold: "to stimulate public

opinion and community participation" and to "provide guiding principles for Governments in their formulation of policy and set objectives for future international cooperation."

Disagreements among the drafters have centered around such questions as: Is there a basic human right to a healthy environment? How far should the declaration go in setting forth duties or responsibilities of states to respect each other's environmental interests and that of the international realm? What special provision should be made for the environmental situation of developing countries?

It remains to be seen whether 27 nations—let alone the 130 expected at Stockholm—widely varying in their legal traditions and economic and environmental circumstances, can agree on a document sufficiently clear and meaningful to exert a real influence on public opinion and on the policies of governments. But the attempt is being made. Perhaps, as has been true for historic documents since Magna Carta, the memorability of this proposed declaration will depend not so much on the force of its words as on the importance of the events from which it was born. To the extent that the world's environmental imperatives continue to demand action in future years—to that extent the declaration of Stockholm may help to provide the concepts by which action can be guided.

CHAPTER VI

Summing Up: The American Stake at Stockholm

As the preceding chapters show, the range of environmental questions potentially within the purview of the Stockholm conference is enormous. Obviously the questions are not all equally urgent or important, nor are they equally in need of international attention.

The international secretariat—consulting as it does with many governments including our own—has worked for most of a year to winnow a mass of preliminary action proposals down to a final list of priority action proposals. The United States as one member has formed its own views as to the relative urgency of those final priorities.

What, then, are the American priorities—the practical results which this country particularly hopes to see emerge from Stockholm next June? How have we determined these priorities, and to what extent do they reflect the views and the long-term interests of the American people? This concluding chapter will briefly address these questions.

Nine U.S. Priorities

The priority objectives of the U.S. Government in the Stockholm conference have come into steadily clearer focus through the past year of preparation—although our final positions on the action proposals have yet to be written. The U.S. priorities as they stood in January 1972 can be summed up under ten headings, listed here without any attempt to rank them in order of importance:

1. *To focus world attention on the problems of the environment.* Environmental action can result only if governments and peoples—in countries at all stages of development—understand the need for it. Conference decisions, including the Declaration on the Human Environment and the continuing flow of news and activities generated by the

conference, should help to promote a new global awareness of environmental problems and their vital importance to man's life.

2. *To speed international action on certain well-defined and urgent pollution problems,* notably:

—A broad attack on marine pollution—through the earliest possible conclusion of a convention to control ocean dumping of toxic wastes, and through agreement on principles to guide further work in this entire field;

—Development of safeguards for the transportation of noxious substances to prevent their accidental release into the environment;

—Agreed international criteria concerning the tolerance of the environment, and of human health for certain pollutants so that governments, using these criteria, can set their own antipollution standards to fit local conditions.

3. *To build a framework for worldwide monitoring* in four sectors of the environment: human health, the atmosphere, the oceans, and the terrestrial environment, so that decisionmakers in future years will know as fully as possible what environmental dangers exist and what the trends are.

4. *To conserve irreplaceable natural and cultural resources* by, for example, creating a World Heritage Trust to preserve unique treasures of man's natural, cultural, and historic heritage; improving soil conservation; developing a world program to preserve important genetic stocks; arranging for conservation of rare species and unique habitats; and strengthening protection for endangered species of flora and fauna.

5. *To develop better mechanisms for international exchange of national experience* so that knowledge gained by each can be available to all in solving such essentially local environmental problems as those of human settlements (sanitation, land-use planning, housing, transportation) and natural resource management (soil erosion, water storage, forestry, etc.).

6. *To foster environmental training and education* including specialist training; interdisciplinary studies for planners, opinion leaders, and decisionmakers; and general environmental education at all levels.

7. *To demonstrate and clarify the relation between*

environmental management and economic development, thereby helping developing countries avoid the environmental mistakes of industrialized countries.

8. *To foster scientific research* into priority aspects of the environment and man's interaction with it.

9. *To encourage regional arrangements* to deal with environmental problems in such fields as water quality in international rivers and lakes, soil management, urbanization, and forestry, which tend to be common to entire regions having similar climate and ecological characteristics.

10. *To establish within the United Nations a clear focal point for leadership and coordination in the global environmental field,* thus pulling together the scattered and often ill-coordinated efforts now being made by many agencies.

The U.S. Policy Process

These priority objectives have emerged from a continuous process of conferring, consulting, and coordinating, both within and outside the Federal Government.

The focal point in the Executive Branch is the Office of Environmental Affairs in the Department of State, headed by Christian A. Herter, Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Environmental Affairs. Mr. Herter heads a Stockholm conference task force representing every concerned Federal agency.* He also heads the U.S. delegation in the U.N.'s 27-nation Preparatory Committee for the conference, and oversees U.S. participation in every aspect of the preparatory process. Thus the United States can speak with a single voice in the preparations, but can draw on the whole range of relevant expertise in the Executive Branch.

The policymaking process also extends beyond the Federal Government into many areas of American life. Early in 1971 Secretary Rogers appointed a 32-member Advisory Committee on the U.N. Conference on the Human Environment, headed by Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., of Tennessee and

*Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Health, Education, and Welfare, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Transportation, Treasury; also Council on Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Management and Budget, Agency for International Development, U.S. Information Agency, Atomic Energy Commission, National Academy of Science, National Science Foundation, and the Department of State.

including leaders and experts from many walks of life. This body, based on study of the preparatory documents, discussion with interested groups, and meetings with those charged with the preparations, plans to file its final recommendations to the Secretary of State several weeks before the conference. In addition, concerned citizens and organizations continue to make known to the Department of State, and to the Advisory Committee and its members, their views on various matters to be taken up at Stockholm.

Citizen interest in the conference continues to rise as the date approaches. It is manifested in coverage by the daily and periodical press, and in seminars and discussions organized by universities and environmental groups.

A number of American nongovernmental organizations, including those interested in conservation and environmental issues, plan to participate at their own expense in a World Environmental Forum to be held in Stockholm during the conference. There they can present displays, organize lecture and discussion programs, and exchange views with their counterparts from other countries and with delegates to the conference.* Other Americans expect to attend the conference itself as accredited observers of various international nongovernmental organizations. Among these organizations, at both national and international levels, are environmentally oriented youth organizations such as the recently created International Youth Conference on the Human Environment. Also interested is the American business community, many of whose members share in both the responsibilities and the opportunities of international environmental action.

Any and all of these interested Americans have a right to ask: What is the country's stake in the Stockholm environment conference?

Broadly, the answer is summed up in the official conference motto: "Only One Earth." Every country, our own included, shares a self-evident interest in assuring the future habitability of man's planetary home. But the conference also promises to serve a number of specifically American interests:

—As a leading maritime power with 12,000 miles of coastline, and major fishing nation, we have an interest in

*Information on plans for the Forum can be obtained from Walter Bogan, Scientists Institute for Public Information, 30 East 68th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. (Telephone: 212-249-3200.)

protecting the threatened marine environment along our own coasts as well as in international waters.

–We have an interest in the growth of worldwide efforts to husband the earth's resources and protect the environment so that economic progress in future years will be attainable without environmental catastrophe.

–We have an interest in developing the current, continuous flow of environmental data, and the deeper scientific understanding, on which critical environmental decisions of the future will depend. No nation can work alone to these ends; they can only be pursued through coordinated, long-term, global research and monitoring programs.

–We have an interest in making the institutions of the U.N. system work as effectively and economically as possible in this major new field of international activity.

–Finally, Americans have a fundamental interest in fostering international cooperation on all questions of common human concern–what President Nixon has called "the world interest"–thereby strengthening the fabric of peace among nations.

Against these American interests–some broad, some quite specific–the Stockholm conference and its followup will also entail costs and commitments. The financial cost to this country cannot yet be estimated but, in all probability, will be small indeed compared to the cost of environmental protection here at home. The legal commitments are likely to include a number of international conventions which if successfully completed either at or following the conference will in due course be submitted to the U.S. Senate for its consent to ratification.

The extent of these commitments, financial, legal, or otherwise, will be determined in the first instance by what the U.S. Government and the governments of other nations jointly decide is in their interest to undertake. But governments–and none more so than that of the United States–ultimately respond to what their concerned citizens desire.

Do concerned Americans desire their Government, at the U.N. conference in Stockholm next June and thereafter, to pursue actively with other nations an environmental strategy designed to increase man's understanding of his interaction with the environment and to keep that environment livable and hospitable to future generations? Are we as a nation prepared to see our country assume the modest costs and commitments that this venture will presumably require of

participating nations? Where should the safeguarding of the world environment stand on America's scale of priorities? Have we—and the other cooperating nations—set our sights too high or too low?

Such questions can be answered today only in tentative and preliminary ways. The Stockholm conference itself, in the perspective of history, will not be a concluding point but rather a step on the way to more confident answers. But it is not too soon for Americans to be pondering these questions, which in one form or another will confront our country and our world through foreseeable time.

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